

ABSTRACT

A system and method by which users via programs on one computer may seamlessly access files remotely stored on other computers that run a well known file access protocol. All programs running on a personal computer may access remote files as easily and in the same manner as accessing files on the personal computer's file system without requiring any changes to the program's method of communicating with the computer's existing file system. An operating system extension and an application level network access program are provided. The operating system extension receives file system requests for remote files from the operating system that were issued according to a well known application program interface. The operating system extension forwards the remote file system request to the network access program. The network access program reformats the request according to a well known application level network protocol extension and sends it over a network to a remote computer system. The network access program receives responses over the network from the remote computer system in the well known format, processes the response, and forwards pertinent information to the operating system extension. The operating system extension then passes responsive information to the program that issued the remote file system request via the well known application program interface. The remote file system may be cached on the local file system so that remote file system requests may be enacted on the locally cached copy. In one embodiment, personal computers access files on remote computers over the Internet via the distributed authoring and versioning (WebDAV) protocol extension to the hypertext transfer protocol (HTTP).